

CIA/OCI CFDEV 73-5-9 CEASE FIRE DEVELOPMENTS
SEC NFD

9 MAY 73

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Cease-Fire Developments

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CAMBODIA

The Military Situation

The Mekong River resupply convoy returning to South Vietnam came under Communist attack on 8 May between Phnom Penh and Neak Luong. Most of the ships were hit, but all managed to reach South Vietnam.

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[redacted] heavy US air strikes on well-entrenched Communist positions along the river banks north of Neak Luong appear to have had little effect on the Communists' ability to harass ship convoys. Unless security along the river improves, the ship captains assigned to the next convoy--now scheduled for 16 May--may balk at making the run to Phnom Penh.

In the south, government troops abandoned the small outpost at Phnom Den near the South Vietnamese border on 8 May. Phnom Den had been under Communist attack for several days. [redacted]

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[redacted] North Vietnamese troops have been supporting Khmer Communist forces in the attacks. The North Vietnamese reportedly are encouraging Khmer Communist commanders to leave the Phnom Den area to them so that Khmer Communist troops can be utilized in other areas of Takeo Province. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Ottawa May Withdraw from ICCS in June

Canada's decision on continued participation in the ICCS may be made as early as mid-May. Current indications are that Ottawa will withdraw its contingent by the end of June. Since the minority Trudeau government agreed conditionally on 27 March to remain on the Commission, opposition from parliament, the press, and the public has grown considerably.

Domestic opposition is based on a number of factors:

--A widespread awareness of the ineffectiveness of the Commission.

--A fear for the safety of the Canadian members of the ICCS; one Canadian was killed last month when the Communists shot down a Commission helicopter.

--Concern over the increased level of hostilities in the region.

The US Embassy in Ottawa believes that the Canadian Government would probably continue its participation in the ICCS only if it could clearly demonstrate to its domestic critics that there was a chance for a lasting peace in Vietnam. According to the embassy, the Canadians will be watching for positive Communist responses to Washington's current efforts to secure adherence to the Paris accord. A significant reduction in the obstructionist tactics of the Hungarian and Polish members of the Commission would go a long way toward permitting the Canadians to remain--at least provisionally--on the ICCS. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/BACKGROUND USE ONLY)

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LAOSLao Communist Delegation in Moscow

Second-ranking Lao Communist leader Nouhak Phoumsavan and his delegation arrived in Moscow on 7 May. This is Nouhak's third trip to Moscow within a year. In keeping with Moscow's normal practice in dealing with the Lao Communists, the Soviet welcome was low keyed. Although Nouhak will probably focus his discussions on future Soviet aid, the visit presents an opportunity for a frank exchange of views on political prospects and strategy. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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